

CONFIDENTIAL
June 22, 1971

Significant Development for President's Daily Brief

US Ships Still in Somali Hands

June 13th Brief reported Somalia's seizure of five American-owned vessels. Seven Americans were among the thirty US, Brazilian and German crew members involved. So far, not even our Embassy's most insistent efforts to achieve consular access have met with success. The Somalis claim that the ships violated their territorial waters and they claim that the vessels were not flying flags and failed to heave to in response to international signals. The only hopeful note has been the June 20 arrival in Mogadiscio of an agent of the ship owners. He seems competent, is trying to salvage the ships, and has talked to the crew, who are apparently in satisfactory shape. Both State and our Embassy intend to keep up their urgent representations to the Somalis.

FOR HAK ONLY. The ships' Houston owners are reportedly hopping mad and threatening to go to the press. They apparently believe that our Embassy's failure to achieve consular access represents a lack of urgency on our part. The owners have been in touch with George Bush at the UN, who in turn has been in contact with State. This is the fourth time since February 1970 that the Somalis have seized our boats. There appears to be little that we can do but grind our teeth right now. The company agent, who has just arrived on the scene, may be a little more successful.


Marshall Wright